

Sinclair Broadcasting's hypocritical decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a flagrant violation of the trust accorded media companies. (It is hypocritical because this same company in April forced its ABC affiliates NOT to air a "Nightline" program it felt was too partisan.)

As former FCC Chair Reed Hundt has recently noted, Congress and the FCC together have passed laws and regulations "to ensure that broadcast television stations provide reasonably accurate, balanced, and fair coverage of major Presidential and Congressional candidates." Hundt went on to note: "Broadcasters understand that they have a special and conditional role in public discourse. They received their licenses from the public -- licenses to use airwaves that, for instance, cellular companies bought in auctions -- for free, and one condition is the obligation to help us hold a fair and free election. The Supreme Court has routinely upheld this 'public interest' obligation. Virtually all broadcasters understand and honor it.

"Sinclair has a different idea, and a wrong one in my view. If Sinclair wants to disseminate propaganda, it should buy a printing press, or create a web site. These other media have no conditions on their publication of points of view. This is the law, and it should be honored."

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Airing a film packed with documented LIES about a Presidential candidate on the eve of the election has nothing whatever to do with the public interest. Sinclair Broadcasting is acting shamefully and the FCC is complicit if it does not act to stop the film from being foisted upon Sinclair affiliates.